Clinical Cardiology

Message From the Chair

Early Career Day a Highlight of Sessions

C oming off of a successful Scientific Sessions 2012 in Los Angeles, the Council on Clinical Cardiology (CLCC) is proud of the accomplishments of our members, ranging from the newest student/trainee members to long-time fellows of the American Heart Association.

One of the hallmarks of Scientific Sessions is the annual Early Career Day, which has become a day of particular significance for our Council members. You need look no further than the accompanying piece by Vinay Taqueti, MD, a Fellow-In-Training member, on the impact that the events of the day have had on her career. Highlights of this year’s Early Career Day included:

• The opening General Session, which CLCC played a central role in planning, featured practical and inspirational talks designed for FIT/Early Career members that were delivered by a number of distinguished leaders in cardiology, including Nancy Brown, CEO of the AHA/ASA, and Giorita Tomassetti, MD, FAHA, the AHA/ASA Immediate Past President.

• The annual mentoring luncheon featured many CLCC members serving as mentors for round-table discussions with FIT/Early Career members.

• The CLCC breakout session for cardiology FIT/Early Career members titled “How to Succeed and Thrive as a Cardiovascular Physician” featured an opening talk by Mark Elfass, MD, FAHA, the AHA/ASA President-Elect, and four panel discussions covered a variety of early career issues, with more than 100 attendees.

• The annual Samuel A. Levine Young Clinical Investigator Award was awarded to Harry Abed, MBBS, for his work on the effects of weight loss and lifestyle modification on atrial fibrillation, and Laennec Young Clinician Award was awarded to Pradeep Nitnian, MD, for his report on an unusual case of pericarditis.

• The CLCC Annual Dinner recognized the Levine and Laennec finalists and Minority Travel Grant awardees and more than 100 Fellows-In-Training.

The Annual Dinner was also an occasion to recognize the achievements of more senior members of CLCC, including our newest electees as FAHAs: Michael Banas, MD, FAHA; Alejandro Abidov, MD, PhD, FAHA; David Aguilar, MD, FAHA; Aiden De Picciotto, MD, FAHA; G. Michael Feller, MD, FAHA; Benjamin Folk, MD, FAHA; Marco Guazzi, MD, FAHA; Tamera Horwich, MD, FAHA; Tomoko Kata, MD, FAHA; Timothy Lee, MD, FAHA; Renato Lopes, MD, FAHA; Kenneth Mahaffey, MD, FAHA; Laura Mauri, MD, FAHA; Jessica Mega, MD, FAHA; Ryo Nakazato, MD, FAHA; Selvo Narasim, MBBS, FAHA; Rupali Raja, MD, FAHA; Sherry Rampaug, MD, MS; FAHA; Shihom Rosenbick, MD, FAHA; Frederic Rube, MD, FAHA; Marc Sabatine, MD, FAHA; Steven Sava, MD, FAHA; Sigurdour Sibert, MD, FAHA; Sanjibieh Singh, MD, FAHA; Pratik Svorvats, MBBS, FAHA; Wada Tahani, MD, FAHA; Larina Tredelenko, MD, PhD, FAHA; Paul Wang, MD, FAHA; Kathalia Wadia, PhD, FAHA; Kevin Whitehead, MD, FAHA; and Richard Williams, MD, FAHA.

The recipients of awards for career and lifetime achievement were:

Distinguished Achievement Award
L. Julian Haywood, MD, FAHA
James B. Herrick Award for Outstanding Achievement in Clinical Cardiology
Laennec Clinician/Educator Lecturer
Patrick O’Gara, MD, FAHA
Laennec Young Clinician Award
Eric S. Williams, MD
Bernard J. Gersh, MBCHB, DPhil, FAHA
Women in Cardiology Mentoring Award
Emelia Benjamin, MD, ScM, FAHA

Although we hope to see you at Scientific Sessions 2013, there’s no need to wait until then to become more involved. Visit my.americanheart.org/clcdcouncil.

Inspirating Possibility

That trip to Chicago in late November was the culmination of an elective cardiology rotation that I would later recognize as a turning point in my medical training. You may remember Scientific Sessions 2006 for contemptuous overviews on the safety of drug eluting stents, or the revelation of the OAT trial confirming no benefit for late angioplasty of an occluded artery post MI. For me, the highlight, which occurred on the Saturday before the meeting officially began, was meeting Professor Eugene Braunwald. More accurately, it was watching him from across a crowded room as he addressed a group of trainees with a preface to his lecture, “Adventures in Cardiovascular Research.”

I am now a third-year cardiology fellow at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and have had the privilege of interacting with Dr. Braunwald at our own Fellows’ Reports. More than once, I have heard him tell the story of the advent of transcutaneous and later transcutaneous cardiac catheterization; of defining the natural history of severe calcific aortic stenosis prior to the adoption of widespread surgical intervention; of the dramatic discovery of “functional aortic stenosis” (now known as hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy) in a young patient in the operating theater; and of the realization that cardiac sinus stimulation not only alleviated angina, but normalized ST segment elevation in a patient in the throes of MI, leading to a revolutionary idea in thrombolysis.

It never gets old. Speaking in a low rumble, he is crystal clear, careful to identify events by the proper chronology and to give credit to co-investigators he mentions by full name. He refers to a revolutionary idea in thrombolysis. He talks about the importance of focusing on big questions and the decision of choosing a mentor as the single most consequential career decision you can make. He peppers his stories with personal anecdotes of unlikely collaborations started at the taxi stand or over dinner at the local housing complex of the former National Heart Institute. And then he goes on to summarize 10 tips for a successful career in translational research.

Not surprising, he continues to command a crowd, often bringing together generations that would later become my attending. It was the first time I felt like I was part of a cardiological community. And it was inspirational.

For me, these experiences provide context for what we set out to do every day in academic cardiology. There is little more powerful than hearing Dr. Braunwald tell of a difficult time, then watch him light up as he describes how a perceived mistake blossomed into discovery. It provides a humbling and inspiring complement to reading about his latest successful randomized clinical trial.

And therein lies the extraordinary value of the AHA’s programs for Fellows-In-Training. It is through these Early Career Day activities that I have had the opportunity to interact informally with the greats of our profession and to hear from thought leaders in unconventional forums as they share a bit about their experiences, with sometimes surprising results. These reflections are critical for fostering context and confidence, a sense of possibility, particularly beyond the confines of any one local institution. It is easy to underestimate the impact this can have on trainees.

Back at McCormick Place later that day, I still remember watching with pride as a fellow with whom I had worked as a medical student presented the case of a patient with an unusual manifestation of amyloid heart disease for the Laennec Clinical Cardiology Award. That fellow would later become my attending. It was the first time I felt like I was part of a cardiological community. And it was inspirational.

By Vinay R. Taqueti, MD

Taqueti is an FIT member of the Council on Clinical Cardiology’s Membership and Communications Committee.

Laennec Award Finalists (L to R) Raymond Chan, MD, Darryl Leong, MBBS, PhD, MPH; Shin Ly, MD, PhD; Jennifer Thibodeaux, MD; Nancy Brown, AHA/ASA (center); and Richard Page, MD, FAHA.

Laennec award Finalists (L to R) Raymond Chan, MD, Darryl Leong, MBBS, PhD, MPH; Shin Ly, MD, PhD; Jennifer Thibodeaux, MD, Nancy Brown, AHA/ASA (center); and Richard Page, MD, FAHA.

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